

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 3 - Tertiary, Skills, International and Indigenous Strategy

DEEWR Question No. EW0835_12

Senator Scullion asked on 20 October 2011 , Hansard page 76

Question

Indigenous Support Program - student numbers

Ms Schofield: ... But I will go back and talk about numbers for a second and then come to that question. On the numbers side, I would say that the funding that is distributed to institutions from the Indigenous Support Program is based on the student numbers that are in each institution, and those numbers are derived from the data that institutions provide to the department twice a year. Those data collections are validated and verified by the institutions themselves. So there is a bit of cross-checking there that takes place.

Senator SCULLION: If, for example, it is twice year, then would the institution get a benefit every six months even if some people dropped away? It is easier to say, 'If they're there for that six-month block you get paid, and if they are not you shouldn't be.' Is that pretty much it, or a part of it?

Ms Schofield: Yes, I think so; but I will take it on notice and confirm that for you.

Answer

The Indigenous Support Program (ISP) provides additional funding to universities over and above the basic Commonwealth Grants Scheme amount for each student place. This funding is to assist universities meet the education needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education students and to advance the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.

Eligibility is limited to Table A providers as listed in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. Universities are granted funding each calendar year. Funding is based on providers' student enrolment, participation and completions data.

A baseline amount of ISP funding is allocated to higher education providers each calendar year. An initial allocation is made to providers in the first 6 months of the year. This initial allocated amount is based on the full ISP allocation made to a provider in the previous calendar year.

In the second six months of the year, when providers' full year enrolment, participation and completion student data becomes available, ISP allocations are adjusted.

Payments of ISP funds to providers are made on a fortnightly basis throughout the calendar year via the Department's UniPay system.